

**Press Contacts:**

Bobbie Jo Kolodziejski,  
Interagency Management Coordinator  
Chugach National Forest  
907-362-2386 cell

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## **Russian River Fishing Season Approaching**

*Angler and visitor responsibility and respect to natural and cultural resources is key to a safe season*

Cooper Landing, Alaska— The Kenai-Russian River area, located on the Chugach National Forest and Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, is an intensively used fishing and recreation area, valued by anglers, federally qualified subsistence users, and other visitors for its easy access. High human use between the months of May and September, coupled with abundant fishery resources, has led to public and employee safety concerns and impacts to the resources in the area. The agencies managing this area are asking visitors to be responsible with their actions to ensure respect for the area's waters, fish, wildlife, and cultural sites.

The 2013 interagency priorities include responsibly managing retained fish, human food and human generated waste (including fish waste) responsibly to reduce the potential for human-bear conflicts.

### **Food Storage Regulation**

A food storage regulation is in effect on both the National Forest System lands and US Fish and Wildlife Service lands and waters in the area. All attractants (for example: food, beverages, and garbage) and equipment used to cook or store food (for example: coolers and backpacks) must be acceptably stored (in a bear resistant container, in your vehicle, or kept within 3 feet of you at all times).

### **Retained Fish in Possession Regulation**

Fish must be kept within 12 feet of you all at times to ensure that bears do not attain your fish.

### **Fish Waste Management**

To minimize the attainment of fish waste from bears during the 2013 field season, anglers are being asked to help by following the requests below:

- ✓ Take fish out whole – Please take fish out whole when possible (gutting and gilling is acceptable) and manage fish waste offsite in a responsible manner based on local solid waste standards.
- ✓ Process fish only at established fish cleaning facilities- If you must clean onsite, please use fish cleaning tables at the confluence or ferry site and chop fish waste into numerous small pieces and throw into fast-moving river current.

- ✓ “Do Your Part” – Help move fish waste downstream by regularly moving any fish waste you encounter along the shore or hanging up on rocks into faster moving water so it will move downstream.

Visitors are also strongly encouraged to respect the areas that are fenced or roped off to protect sensitive plants and cultural sites. They need to stay on maintained and established trails and boardwalks. Visitors are also strongly requested to use the public restroom facilities that are dispersed throughout the area due to the potential of disturbing sensitive cultural sites along the river corridor.

A Russian River Interagency Coordination Group was formed in 2006 to coordinate management of public resources of the Russian River area. The group includes representatives from the USDA Forest Service; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Divisions of Wildlife and Sport Fish; Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation; Cook Inlet Region Incorporated; and the Kenaitze Indian Tribe.

In February 2013, a five-year action plan was finalized that outlines actions that will be implemented to reduce the potential for human-bear conflicts in the Kenai-Russian River area. To view summaries from the public process or to view the final plan, please visit <https://projects.ecr.gov/kenai-russianriver/default.aspx>

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